



Bereaved Parents of the USA

Anne Arundel County Chapter

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Happy Mother's Day !

Happy Father's Day !

To all of you, from all of our children.

These days are often very difficult for bereaved parents. I find them as hard to face as other major holidays, especially since my mother and father have both passed, along with my son. So these days are double-edged for me. I find myself relying on what I've learned from other bereaved parents. Foremost, have a plan, no matter what that includes. Second, you can change your plan. And as always, the anticipation of the day is often worse than the day itself.

Take care of yourself, do what brings you peace, and remember all the love and happy memories.

Blessings, Carol Tomaszewski, Dave's Mom

CHAPTER GATHERINGS and MEETINGS

**ZOOM Virtual Meeting on May 6
Hybrid – Virtual meeting on June 3, 2021**

COVID-19 still leaves us ZOOMing for our monthly Gatherings.

We are all looking forward to the time when we can come together and see each other face-to-face and give and receive those wonderful hugs. But for now, we continue our ZOOM virtual meetings, and stay home, and stay safe.

Parents, invite and encourage your children to join our monthly gathering and participate in the **Sibling Sharing Group**.

For more general information on using ZOOM and our monthly gatherings, see **p. 23**, or contact our ZOOM host, Bob Burash, 410-551-5774, aabereavedparents@gmail.com

May 6 at 7:00 Virtual Gathering Watch for an email with details for joining with ZOOM, and information on the meeting topic and sharing groups.

June 3 at 7:00 Hybrid - Virtual Gathering: Presentation by Mitch Carmody, topic TBD. If planning is successful, we hope this will be our first Hybrid-Virtual Chapter Meeting. Some of us will be gathering in the **main floor parlor** at Calvary United Methodist Church, 301 Rowe Blvd, Annapolis, MD. And others can join through ZOOM as we have been doing for the past year.

Amanda Hughes, Sibling Support Coordinator, Anne Arundel County Chapter, BPUSA, will facilitate a Sibling Sharing Group during our monthly virtual gatherings. Parents, please share this information with your family, and encourage grieving siblings to join and share with Amanda. For more information, please contact Amanda at alrhalbach@gmail.com , or Bob Burash, Chapter Leader, at aabereavedparents@gmail.com , 410-551-5774.

Other important dates:

May 13 at 7:00 PM Core Group Hybrid - Virtual Meeting. NOTE: The date has changed so we can practice hosting a hybrid – virtual meeting, in preparation for the June Chapter Gathering. *Everyone is welcome*. Please let Bob Burash, 410-551-5774, aabereavedparents@gmail.com know if you are interested in attending as a *new volunteer*. For information on the purpose of the Core Group and meetings, please see p. 24.


THOUGHTS AND ARTICLES FROM CHAPTER MEMBERS

Healing through Helping

In her book *My Son... My Son...* Iris Bolton wrote that a "dear friend" had shared that there was a gift for her in her son's death, and he warned that it would be difficult to grasp but that it could be hers if she were willing to search for it. He told her, "The gift is real and precious, and you can find it if you choose."

Irene, Mari, and Linda, bereaved moms in our chapter, may have found a gift in their child's death.

Irene, bereaved mom of Joey, recently recalled that when she and her husband Joe first came to one of our monthly gatherings, she read a sign that said, 'Healing through helping'. Why did Irene recall this phrase? Perhaps, she, like so many other bereaved parents, found she is healing through helping other bereaved parents or strangers when she reaches out a helping hand.

Not long ago, BP/USA National asked all chapters if anyone of their members who had lost a child spoke Spanish well enough to converse with a newly bereaved parent in California. National was trying to find someone who could speak with this mom on the phone and help her feel less isolated in her grief. Irene, a Spanish speaking bereaved mother in our chapter, after learning of the need, without hesitation, said she would be happy to help. They spoke for over an hour with plans to speak again.

Mari, bereaved mom of Stokely, consoled two co-workers, who had recently lost infant children, explaining that she and her husband still remembered, even after 4 years, that fresh raw pain these moms and dads were going through. Mari suggested our gatherings because of the support and love we shared and that we offered hope. Mari's caring for these two moms blossomed in that each of them have been able to help bereaved moms in Delaware and North Carolina.

Linda, bereaved mom of William, began making 'heaven day' cards for some of us in the early years of her grief and over the years has included many more children. Linda is creative, imaginative and has created cards that typically represent something of the child. Linda usually does not know much, if anything, about a child. She will tell you that William or one of our other children has guided her. Today, there are several children whose spirit guides Linda.

These moms chose to find a gift, have you found yours?

Bob Burash
Paul's dad
Chapter Leader, BP/USA Anne Arundel County Chapter, Maryland

Dear fellow bereaved parents,

There is a little, yet astronomically huge thing I want you to take with you everywhere you go. I want you to always remember that yes, we are the most unfortunate because we lost our children, but also - and most importantly - we are the most blessed. Because, for no matter how short the time, we got to have them. We got to have the greatest gift anyone could ever be given. We got to have our beloved children.

So, when you are hurting so very terribly because of the excruciating pain of their loss, remember to give thanks for that most glorious of gifts: the gift of your child or children. Yes, we are the most grievously wounded of people because our children are gone, but we are also the most greatly blessed because we got to have them.

I wish you peace and happiness and the gift of gratitude.

Linda Khadem, William's Mom

BPUSA, Anne Arundel County Chapter, MD

To have Loved and Lost.....

"Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" a poet once said. As a child, growing up in tremendous pain, I didn't believe that. I thought the pain to bear from loss too great an agony to suffer. I had already a tremendous burden to carry. Any additional pain seemed too great a price to risk for that of fleeting happiness. My wounds were too deep.

When I started a family of my own, my happiness excelled. I spent more time in a happy place than in that of sorrow and almost completely forgot about the ever-present pain of my youth.

Things were so good that in the beginning I had a sense of impending doom. Good Things like that didn't happen for people like me. I knew that something terrible was going to happen. There was no way around it. I did not deserve and could not have such joy without a terrible price to pay. This feeling lasted for several years, but dissipated slightly with each one until the point where I completely forgot about it. Where it had almost consumed me, it turned to something I wouldn't think of for years. Until two weeks before William died.

As I sat playing idly at the computer one afternoon waiting for him to get off work, I was struck from behind by a terrible force. So powerful was it that I literally almost fell off my chair. The force told me with an abruptness so sharp that my son was going to die. I thought it had to be my older son who lived with his wife in another town. It was unfathomable, completely out of the realm of possibility that it could be William. The thought didn't even cross my mind.

The sensation was so intense that I immediately began to scream and cry. I clasped my hands together in prayer begging God that he not take Seyed. I screamed so hard that my vocal chords were shredded raw. I pleaded with all my heart and mind and soul that I be spared that terrible tragedy.

Two weeks later we were tear-drenched in the hospital room in utter disbelief that the life of our beloved younger son William was gone forever. Never was he to roam this earth again, never again to laugh hysterically at the silliest jokes, never again to try to explain the intricacies of Star Wars, never again to give a heartfelt hug. Our beautiful, hazel-green eyed son had passed from our loving home to the outstretched arms of God.

The excruciating suffering was beyond words, a pain beyond anything possible of description, A pain beyond dimension. It far surmounted the hours-long agony I felt at my premonition. To this day I am not sure if I was mistaken and the entity was telling me that it was William who was going to die or if it had granted what I did not realize and had no intention of asking, that it take the life of William instead of Seyed. I surely did not mean the latter. I so badly did not want to lose either.

The thought of losing William was beyond my comprehension, but that was what happened. Was that sense of foreboding from so long ago a premonition, as well or was that just a feeling people who have lived a life of pain have when things start to go right for them? That I do not know. But I do know that, as I sat on the side of my bed the night William died in my indescribable, blistering pain, I asked myself the question, was it better to have loved William and lost him than never to have loved him at all?

In spite of a pain so horrendous as to seem eternal and all consuming, a pain seemingly unsurvivable, my conclusion was a resounding YES! YES, YES, YES, YES, YES, YES!!!!

I concluded if I had to face that horrific, horrific pain a million times over, it would be worth it for even just one more minute with my beloved child. I would gladly endure whatever torturous measures I had to, to be given the gift of even one short, but oh, so precious moment with William.

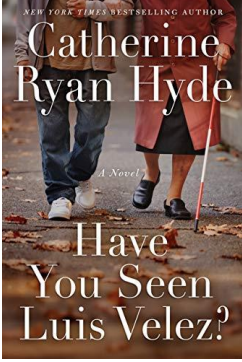
In the nine years that have passed since his death I have come to see that all hope for that time is not lost. I have come to see that our children are out there and that they love us and want us to be happy. I have come to see that they do not want us to dwell in the land of pain, suffering and sorrow. I have come to see that, if they can visit us here on Earth, even if only in spirit, that there will come a time for us to be rejoined. I have come to see that we will have not just one moment together, but an eternity and it will be GLORIOUS!

I pray that this writing will bring you even just a temporary bit of solace. I pray that one day, in the not too distant future, your grieving be transformed to gratitude. I pray that one day, in the not too distant future, that happy memories outshine your grief. I pray that one day, perhaps in the distant future, that your arms will entwine with those of your beloved child or children and that you will experience that joy, yet again.

Linda Khadem, William's Mom, 3/21/21
BPUSA, Anne Arundel County Chapter, MD

The Right Words

By Carol Tomaszewski, Dave's Mom
BPUSA Anne Arundel County Chapter, MD



Following is from a novel by Catherine Ryan Hyde, "Have You Seen Luis Velez?". Hyde writes stories about young people and the issues they face in their relationships with family, friends and community. This is pure fiction, but infused with pure reality.

I started this novel and am in the middle of it on Dave's 20th Heaven Anniversary. This day I am caught in the realm between reality and fantasy. My mind knows the reality of 20 years, but my heart does not.

I thought I would get lost in the visions of the story to pass the time, and instead was given the following ... a conversation between a 92-year-old and the teenager who has recently become her friend and helper. I was listening to the audible version, so it almost felt like my mother was

talking to me.

"Life takes something away from all of us. I will tell you something about life that you might or might not know, my young friend. Life gives us nothing outright. It only lends. Nothing is ours to keep. Absolutely nothing. Not even our bodies, our brains. This 'self' that we think we know so well, that we think of as us. It is only on loan. If a person comes into our life, they will go again. In a parting of ways, or because everyone dies. They will die or you will die. Nothing we receive in this life are we allowed to keep."

"Living long is a gift denied to many and so it comes with a responsibility to make the most of it. At the very least to appreciate it."

Life has taken a lot from all of us bereaved parents.

And sometimes it gives us the right words at the right time, and a different perspective on the reality of life to consider.

**"The reality is that you will grieve forever.
You will not 'get over' the loss of a loved one;
you will learn to live with it.
You will heal and you will rebuild yourself
around the loss you have suffered.
You will be whole again
but you will never be the same.
Nor should you be the same.
Nor would you want to."**

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

What COVID taught me about grief...

by [Gary Roe](https://www.garyroe.com/2021/04/01/what-covid-taught-me-about-grief/) | <https://www.garyroe.com/2021/04/01/what-covid-taught-me-about-grief/>



Having COVID taught me a lot. Living in the COVID era has taught me even more. Specifically, COVID reminded me of some key truths about grief. When we lose sight of these simple truths, things go badly.

COVID...

This virus effects everyone differently. Some are asymptomatic. Some have light cases. Others are affected more heavily. Still others are hit severely.

People experience different symptoms at different times. We've developed a long list of possible symptoms and their severity. These seem to be able to occur in almost any order and combination.

Treatment is based on each person and each case. There are several recommended treatment regimens for COVID, depending on how a person is affected and the severity of each individual case. The individual's pre-existing conditions and current overall health play a large role in this.

There are patterns to how this virus works. Discovering these patterns has enabled us to come up with patterns of prevention and treatment that work for many people.

Loss...

Loss affects everyone differently, even if our losses are similar. Some of us are hit hard. Our whole world is upended. Some of us are debilitated for a time. Some are able to continue to function fairly well. Still others appear less affected overall.

People experience different things in grief at different times. The more we travel the grief road, the more we realize that grief is an individual process. We all experience different things at different times. Because no two people and no two losses are the same, no two grief journeys are the same.

What helps in grief is different for each person. Though each of us is unique and all our losses are different, there are some grief "patterns" that emerge that are common to all of us. No matter where we are in our grief journey, there are certain keys to healthy grieving that apply to all of us. We just have to discover what seems best for us at any given time.

There are patterns to the grief process that are common to almost everyone. Along the way, we discover that many people experience the same kinds of emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, and relational upheavals and

struggles. Though our losses are all different, it's reassuring to know that we can apply some of the same grief recovery principles and walk together through this.

You are unique. Your grief process won't look exactly like anyone else's. This is what makes this journey so lonely.

The one you lost was unique. Your relationship with them was one-of-a-kind. This is what makes your grief so special. Your grief says, "I love you."

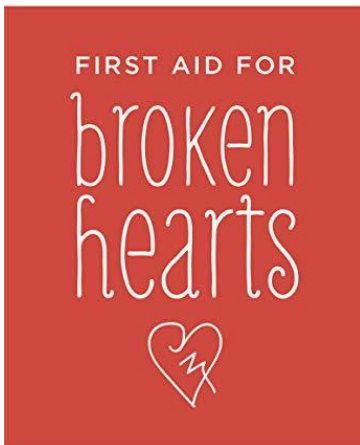
What helps you might not help someone else, and vice versa. So much of grief is about timing. Different things help at different times. Grief is a moving target.

Your grief has patterns to it that almost every other grieving heart will experience on some level (especially those dealing with a similar loss). You are not alone. Far from it.

Can you see these grief truths operating in your life? Which one resonates the most with you right now?

Please be kind to yourself today. Pay attention to your heart. You're more important than you know.

Warmly,
Gary

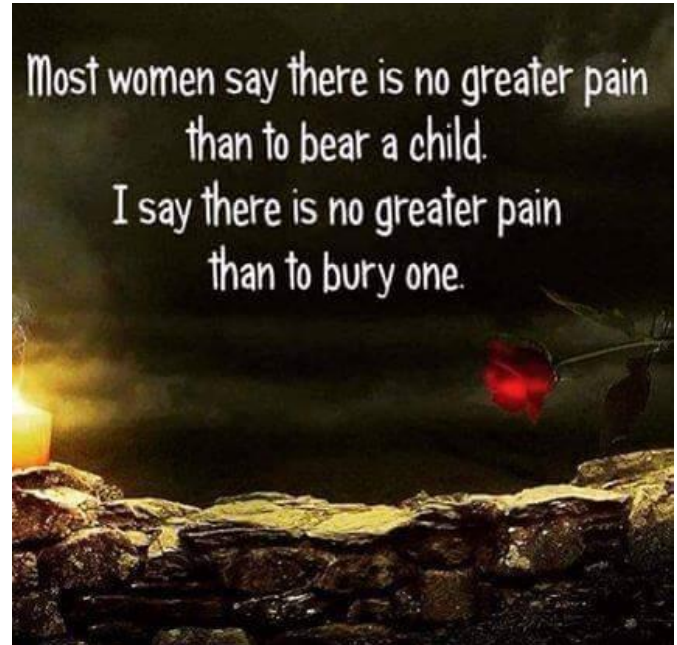
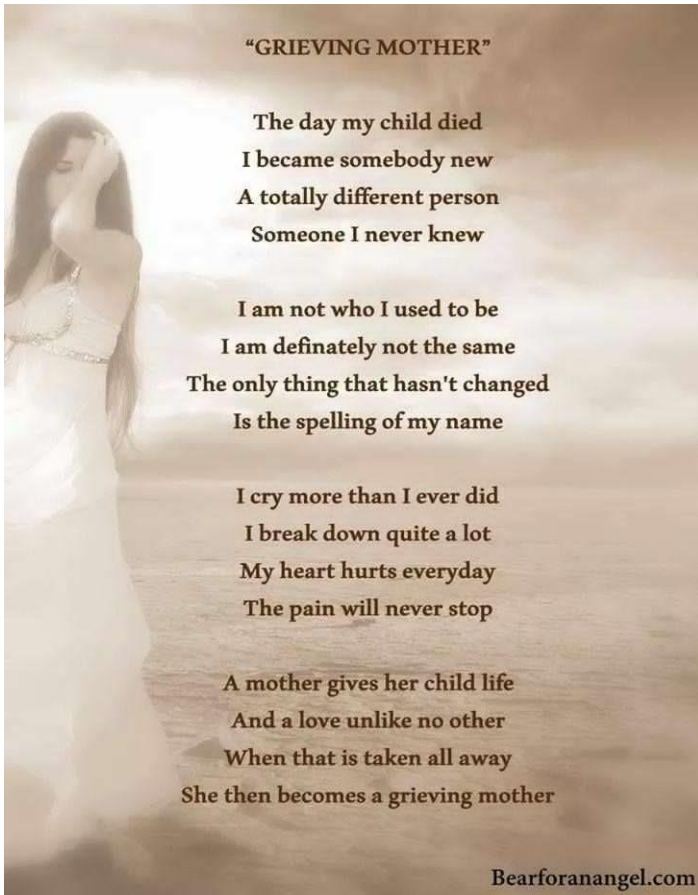


ALAN D. WOLFELT, PH.D.

First Aid for Broken Hearts

by [Alan D. Wolfelt](#) (Author)

Life is both wonderful and devastating. It graces us with joy, and it breaks our hearts. If your heart is broken, this book is for you. Whether you're struggling with a death, break-up, illness, unwanted life change, or loss of any kind, this book will help you both understand your predicament and figure out what to do about it. Loss may be an unavoidable part of human life, but it doesn't have to prevent you from living well. You can and will survive this. Actually, if you adopt this guide's basic principles, revealed and tested by one of the world's most beloved grief counselors, you will even go on to thrive. Let's get mending.



Struggling to Remember the Past

Understanding Grief : Eleanor Haley

https://whatsyourgrief.com/struggling-to-remember-the-past/?inf_contact_key=39b4cc79bda24fe6ab1cc3a190a1ff8b680f8914173f9191b1c0223e68310bb1



Fourteen years after my mother's death, I find I'm not only grieving her but also my memory of her. I mean that literally, as in, I'm grieving the loss of actual memories as I struggle to *really* remember her in any tangible way. I want to feel her presence and see her clearly in my mind, but she's impossible to recreate. She's more abstract to me now than anything, and that's gutting.

We always say our grief evolves and grows with us as time goes on. Sometimes that means finding new points of comfort and connection, and sometimes it means stumbling upon new losses. I guess I've stumbled again.

As time goes by, I feel so far away and disconnected from the past that I suddenly have an intense yearning to go back. To fill in my spotty memory with the smallest of things, like the smell of my grandmother's freshly washed towels or the sound of my mother's voice as she takes the kitchen wall phone off the receiver and says "hello."

I like many things about my life in the present. But if I could turn around and walk into the past, knowing I'd find my way back here again to the people I love, I'd do it in a heartbeat. No one tells you when you're young that life can change so much. That one day, you may realize the people and places of your past feel like they're from a completely different story.

I'm suddenly almost angry that I can't go back to before. I accept that my mother is dead, but must not *fully* accept that the past is the past because I keep reaching for it and finding over and over again that it's gone. It's a repetitive ache, like the chronic pain of a once broken bone.

People have shared with us that they struggle to remember the past and their loved ones, which is a troubling secondary loss. They connect to an idea of their loved one but struggle to access specific memories of them. Sometimes this is because their memories faded over time and sometimes because they had limited memories in the first place.

I recognize that many people early on in their grief fear this will eventually happen, so I'm sorry if this conversation exacerbates your worry. Remember, there's no guarantee you will ever feel any particular way in grief. And if you struggle to remember the past someday, know there are many ways to feel *psychologically* connected to your loved one that can bring you comfort.

All that said, let's take a few minutes to brainstorm ways to connect with memories of a loved one, especially when you feel disconnected.

Ways to Connect With and Remember the Past

1. **Watch old videos:** Old videos may be the next best thing to revisiting the past because you can actually see and hear your loved ones.
2. **Look at photos:** Photos aren't quite as dimensional as video, but they can provide a great visual of people and places in the past. Photos also tend to trigger memories you may have otherwise forgotten.
3. **Write or journal about the past:** Try the journaling prompt from our article [*I Miss the Sound of Your Voice: Grieving Sensory Memory*](#)
4. **Talk to people who knew your loved one or shared your past:** Relationships are so unique that each person tends to have a different set of memories related to shared people and places.
5. **Look at objects or visit places that remind you of the person:** Again, sometimes context can trigger memories. Things like being in a place your loved one frequented, holding an object that reminds you of them, looking at their handwriting can help you remember.

Ways to Preserve Present Day Memories

There's an added layer to this conversation for me. My mother's death created a framework for understanding loss, and now I see how we *all* fit within it. I spend the same moments with my kids that I believe my mother spent with me, and they feel so treasured and memorable at the moment. But I think to myself, someday, we may struggle to access memories of these moments. This home that we know every crack and corner of will seem like a place from a dream, and maybe I'll even be an abstract memory to them.

Maybe you think I sound neurotic, and maybe I'm okay with that. If you have similar struggles, here are a few quick tips for remembering present-day experiences.

1. **Be present!** The number one rule to remembering something is to pay attention to it. If you're distracted by X, Y, or Z, you will be less likely to remember your experiences later. Put down your phone, tell your brain you're taking a little time off from worry, and try and live *in* your experience. I know, easier said than done, but it's worth a try.
2. **Keep a journal:** We know keeping up with a journaling practice is hard, but journaling has many positive benefits! One is that it's a record of your life that you can look back on. Throw away your preconceived notions about what it means to be a journaler. You can draw, doodle, write one sentence a day, [bullet journal](#), keep a gratitude journal – whatever works for you. If you're interested in journaling as a tool for coping with grief, check out our [self-paced grief journaling online course](#).
3. **Take photos and videos:** Preserve memories as often as you can. Though, be careful not to get so caught up in preserving the moment that you sacrifice being present in it.



From One Grieving Dad to Another

Litsa Williams <https://whatsyourgrief.com/fathers-day-grief/>

We asked grieving dads on social media to tell us what they would tell another grieving dad. What would they share to help someone else understand their deep Father's Day grief and everyday grief? The responses we got, there is really no way to introduce them. We wish we could have included every single one. Today, this Father's Day, we'll let a few of these grieving dads speak for themselves . . .

I had a great nine years with my Lexi

Jeremy Earney

before a seizure took her away from me. I always lived a "normal" life. But now I have to find a new normal as I can never have the old one back. When you lose a child, they take such a big part of you with them to heaven. You will always have that open space in your soul for that's where you store the memories. It takes time, trust me, each person grieves differently, at their own pace. You will never truly be done grieving, you will learn to live and cope with it each day. I believe the human mind is so powerful that it will build walls around this time of your life, your emotions, your feelings will be kept in this box forever as a keepsake. The only time you can access this is when you let your walls down. Don't be afraid to cry, or be sad at times. But thrive off of the memories and good times. Just don't let the grief consume you completely. There will come a day when you will look back and see the goods before the bads.

"You will always have that open space in your soul for that's where you store the memories."

From one dad to another, peace
be with you my friend.

www.whatsyourgrief.com

Mike and I were best friends

Bob Maxwell

Now, though it has been 9 years since he passed away at the age of 21, I still feel like I am only half a human. I am an amputee - a father without a son. THAT is my new normal. I do laugh, there are times I am not dwelling on my loss and that I actually find some measure of fulfillment in my job. However, do not scratch the surface -- you will find pain and anger. Do not think I want to hold someone else's child or grandchild -- I can do it, but it is no kindness to me.

"I am an amputee - a father without a son."

www.whatsyourgrief.com

I may look the same

Mark Myers

I may look the same as before Kylie died, but I am a different man altogether. I will love you more fiercely and respect the good and genuine in you and others. But I will no longer tolerate meaningless and petty attitudes and pursuits. I won't waste my time on things that don't matter. I don't fear death because part of me is already dead. I miss her every day even when I laugh and smile.

That is the thing I hope people understand: that I'm radically different in this grieving life - take me or leave me.

www.whatsyourgrief.com

I had a dream about my son Terry Burgess

I had a dream about my son Bryan while he was deployed to Afghanistan. We were walking side by side on a dusty, rocky road. He was dressed in full Army Combat Uniform and was speaking to me, but there was no sound. He took me by the elbow and guided me around a corner into an outdoor movie theater. We took our seats and there on the movie screen appeared Bryan in his combat uniform. The camera pulled back and I could see that he was standing beside a glass coffin. He stepped into the coffin, laid down, and as soon as his helmet touched the satin pillow he turned into my little boy Bryan. Little boy Bryan sat up, stepped out of the coffin and became warrior Bryan again. Bryan gave me that crooked smile I knew so well, a sharp salute, and then the screen went blindingly white. I turned to look at Bryan in the seat beside me, but he was gone. It was at that point that I woke up to the phone ringing. It was my daughter-in-law telling me that Bryan had been killed in action in Afghanistan early that morning.

So many things were taken away.

My only son was gone. There were plans for his 30th birthday the next month. Tickets had been bought for a Disney World trip with his wife and kids. There would be no Happy Birthday ever again. There would be no more Happy Father's Day. I would feel guilty celebrating any holiday. I would even feel guilty if something made me laugh or smile. I'm proud of what Bryan did while he was enlisted in the United States Army. I'm proud of my son. But when I think of that dream; when I think that Bryan spent his energy to

visit me half a world away to tell me to honor the soldier and not to just mourn my little boy, then I have to smile. Bryan will never walk through my door again. I'll never get another greeting card from him. But he will always be my son. And I will always cry on Father's Day.

www.whatsyourgrief.com

My enemy named Silence'. Paul Sanders

Being slightly introverted my entire life, I always wanted silence. I wanted to be alone with my thoughts, or no thoughts at all. Since we lost Milo, I loathe silence. It brings with it the memory of the lack of sound in the O.R. when they removed him from the warmth of his mother's womb (I will always be haunted by this moment. I would almost call it PTSD.). We knew he was gone before this, but anyone who has been through this knows that you illogically pray for and crave to hear that cry. You want their arms and legs to wriggle. You expect it, regardless of what science, logic, and sanity dictate. So in silence, I watched them clean him off. He was motionless, much like I probably was. I wanted to look away and forget that any of this ever happened. I wanted to hide away with my thoughts of the mundane things in life. Sports. Weather. Something silly our four year old said. I tried, unsuccessfully to wall myself off from the horrific, cold void that started with the bad news, and was now widening exponentially. I looked down at the inexplicable sorrow that filled my wife's face. There was nothing I could do... about any of this. You always want to help the ones you love, and I knew there was absolutely nothing I could do for her, or for Milo, or myself. I wanted sounds. I wanted congratulations all around from the staff, family, and friends. That wasn't coming. Everyone agreed that he was beautiful. He was and is our beautiful boy. Having a finite amount of positive things that people can muster up to say about your baby is hard to deal with. You want to hear more of the word 'and' between compliments.

Those few comments come from everyone, and then they stop, and we are left with... silence. More silence.

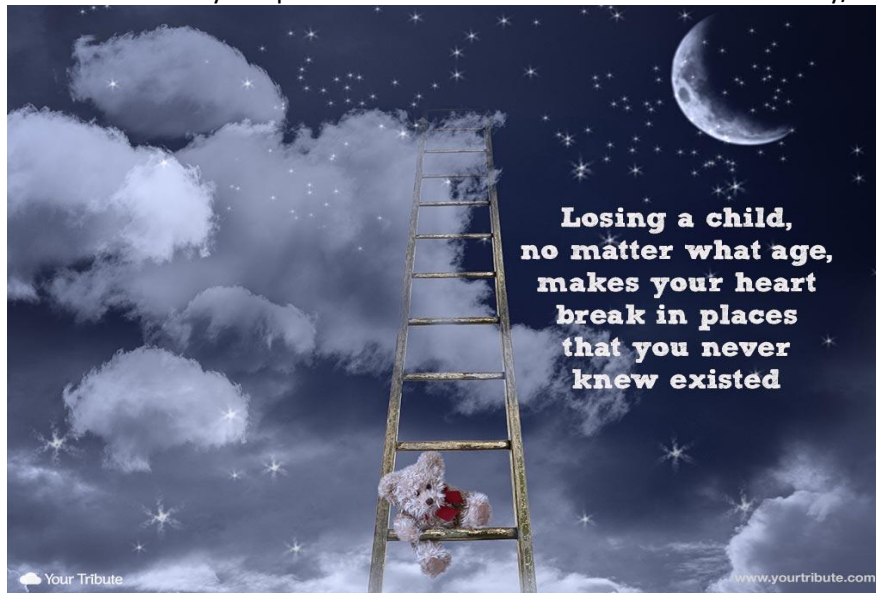
When my wife referred me to this post, I wanted to write something semi-uplifting. Something filled with pride, especially with Father's Day approaching. I'm sorry the above/below is so dark, and I'm sorry for what may seem like rambling thoughts. You have caught me/us on a dark day. I got to meet him exactly nine months ago.

My wife met him long before that. I miss him. His weight in my arms during the time we got to hold him. That ever present feeling of wanting to protect him, even though nothing could hurt him anymore. That's such a contrast to our daily lives. We hurt continuously, in waves of shallow and deep sorrowful waters. There is no more standard happiness for me. It's adjusted. The scale has been modified. I have happy moments and days, but it's not the same, and it never will be. Sometimes that's okay. Sometimes it really, REALLY isn't. Today is not good.

My heart goes out to anyone reading this that has been affected by tragedy, whether it be of this kind or not.

Be well.

"There was nothing I could do... about any of this."



Coping with losing a child

The difference between fathers and mothers dealing with grief

by helpwithgrief.org <https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/child/couples-and-grief/>

September 17, 2017

I write this at the risk of promoting stereotypes but I think it is important to discuss differences in how fathers and mothers tend to grieve. This discussion will certainly not completely apply to any particular couple but I hope there is enough useful information to help fathers and mothers better understand and support each other. I will use the terms “husband” and “wife” while acknowledging that these terms do not necessarily apply to all parental units.

In our culture women tend to form close relationships with other women, and these relationships are typically excellent sources of support during challenging times. Women usually expect to be able to share their joys and their sorrows with their close friends and family members. When a child dies, it is normal for a mother to turn to her support system for comfort.

Sometimes it is hard for a husband to understand why his wife needs to talk about the death so much. It might seem to him that talking with her friends and family about the death only makes his wife more upset. Men sometimes wonder why women seem to dwell on what happened instead of moving on.

On the other hand, women frequently share with me that it seems as if their husbands are not grieving. Women tend to view not talking about the child as abnormal, and maybe even a sign that the father does not care as much as the mother. Men’s tendency to “stay busy” following a child’s death is also viewed in a negative way by many women.

I have talked with many mothers and fathers following the death of a child, and I have developed a view of how the genders typically cope with the death of a child. Mothers usually have a deep need to remember in obvious

ways, and so they talk about the child and everything that happened. They watch videos, make scrapbooks, hang pictures, and they talk a lot. Mothers are more open with their grief, and therefore their pain and functional limitations are usually quite obvious.

In our society, men are expected to fix things and when a child dies, a father is confronted with the reality that this is not something he can fix. Not only is his child gone, but typically his wife is in deep and obvious pain and he is helpless to fix that. Conditioned to “do something”, it is completely understandable to me that many men retreat from their wife’s grief into their work, where they can actually accomplish something most days.

Something else that I have observed over the past few years is the profound loneliness of a bereaved father. Men are not usually allowed the privilege of close friendships the way women are in our society, and so often men rely on their wives for their primary source of emotional support. When a couple loses a child, the wife turns to her friends/family while the husband is faced with the loss of his child AND his primary support system – his wife. This is nobody’s fault but it is very often a reality.

Mothers and fathers may express their grief in different ways, but I am convinced that expression (or lack thereof) is not an indicator of depth of grief. Men and women both suffer profoundly and deeply when they lose a child, even if their grieving looks different.

Differences in grief do not have to drive couples apart. The first thing that can help is to remember that it is perfectly normal for people to express grief in different ways. Second, it is also normal to cope with grief in different ways, and we certainly see this in every couple that loses a child. Judging another person’s grief is not helpful or loving, and so mothers and fathers need to aim for acceptance with each other. Third, it is very important not to use grief as a measure of love. A parent whose grief is more private did not love that child any less simply because s/he is not as open with feelings.

In addition to being gentle and accepting of our partner’s grief experience, couples can support each other by actively working on their relationship. A child’s legacy should not be the destruction of his/her parents’ relationship and so it is a tribute to the child you both love to work on the relationship. Think back to a time when your relationship was happy – what did you do together? What did you talk about? Make a list and then start doing those things from a happier time.

The death of a child is a big strain on a relationship but it does not mean a marriage or relationship is doomed to failure! Understanding and respecting differences in the expression of grief is important and so is making time for the relationship. Take that other parent – the one your sweet child loved so much – and do something kind and loving in honor of your child.

Sometimes relationships need help, and that is certainly available. Marriage counselors can help couples find a smoother path again. If a counselor seems like a good idea, be prepared to shop around for one that seems compatible with you and your spouse. Also, look for one that has experience both with couples and also with grief.

There are wide variations of normal grief in both men and women. Differences in the expression of grief and coping should not be seen as a problem, but simply as differences. Children’s memories are honored when we continue to love, respect and support the other parent through the difficult – but shared – loss of that child.

Grief Doesn't Take a Holiday in Spring and Summer



For some children/teens and their caregivers, the changing seasons can bring reminders of their grief. If the person died in the spring when the lilacs were in bloom, the sight and smell of lilacs may suddenly trigger painful memories of the funeral. Practicing soccer or baseball is not so inviting when the parent who taught the child to play is no longer there to help improve his/her skills at the game. Mother's and Father's Day are times when most children are guided by the other parent to make or buy a small gift to show appreciation and love for the celebrated parent. However, for the child or teen for whose parent has died, these days are painful reminders that they are different than their peers. For children or youth who want to get excited about summer, there is often an underlying feeling of guilt about allowing them self to engage in the fun activities of summer.

The little seasonal reminders of grief and loss will always occur. So how to maintain strength and optimism, and not have the grief triggers of the warmer seasons overtake your family's happy moments?

HOW PARENTS/GUARDIANS CAN SUPPORT THEMSELVES AND THEIR GRIEVING CHILD OR TEEN

As a parent/guardian wanting to ease the pain of your family's grief, it can be helpful to be aware and prepare for the grief days which come with spring and summer. The following are a few suggestions:

Be aware of the possible sensory reminders connected to grief for your child. Seeing other kids doing simple summer activities with their family can be a painful reminder if your child used to do those activities with their person who died. You might acknowledge this and use it as a chance to share a positive memory with your child about the person who died, then carry on with the day.

The sounds and smells of spring and summer may bring reminders of the person who died for your child (and yourself). If your child's mood changes suddenly and they don't know why, it may be due to invisible triggers.

Look at the calendar and make note of upcoming events which may be more difficult grief days over the spring and summer. Awareness is key to getting ahead of a grief tsunami. Make a plan to help yourself and your children get through the day, but also make a plan B. Having multiple options will help everyone feel less overwhelmed.

If the birthday or death anniversary of the person who died will occur in the next few months, know that anticipation of the day in the weeks leading up to it will likely have an effect on the moods of your family members. It may also make it difficult for your child to focus on schoolwork. Acknowledging to children that the day is coming up, and that emotional upset is natural, may help your child/teen understand their feelings.

If it was a spouse who died, remind the teacher of the child's loss well ahead of Mother's or Father's Day. Teachers are human, they may forget to be sensitive to your child's situation. They may have many children in their class with complex families. Your child might still want to do the class activity for their deceased parent, or they may need to be given the choice to be excused during this time. Giving choice is key to helping the child/teen feel more in control of his/her grief.

If graduation or another important milestone is coming up, it is usually better to acknowledge to your child before the big day that there will be sadness mixed with joy because the person who died won't be present. Letting out painful feelings before the day can release some of the tension, and allow the child permission to celebrate their own success on the big day.





Our Children Remembered May 2021

Jordan Edward Ambrozewicz
 Son of Steven and Beverly Ambrozewicz
 May 27, 1993 - May 10, 1995

Jonathan David Aorilio
 Son of Tracie Aorilio
 May 18, 1996 - August 28, 2018

Dora Baldwin
 Daughter of Aurelia Ferraro
 December 11, 1964 - May 2, 2012

Donald Gordon Barrett
 Son of Kathy and Don Barrett
 May 14, 1976 - May 3, 2002

Paul Shane Brough
 Son of Theresa and Steve Bleemke
 May 18, 1982 - April 4, 2003

Anthony Raymond Cesario
 Son of Lisa Cesario
 March 25, 1989 - May 1, 2017

Pamela Grace Clair
 Daughter of Doris and Charles Clair
 June 3, 1954 - May 11, 1984

Robert "Bo" William DePaola
 Son of Jill and John DePaola
 March 22, 1995 - May 23, 2015

Michelle Marie Dyke
 Daughter of Marie Dyke
 May 19, 1975 - November 10, 1992

Jeffrey Arthur Elder, Jr.
 Son of Kymn and Brendan Burns McFetridge
 May 17, 1986 - March 22, 2018

Joseph Fredrick Errichiello Jr.
 Son of Susan and Joe Errichiello
 April 6, 1979 - May 29, 2004

Andrew Thomas "Drew" Gawthrop
 Son of Brenda Gawthrop
 May 25, 1990 - August 12, 2002

Matthew Gordon Haines
 Son of Gordon and Peggy Haines
 May 3, 1977 - July 4, 1996

Charles Lee Holmes. Sr
 Son of Charlene Kvech
 July 4, 1958 - May 22, 2019

Michael Warren "Mikey" Hugel, Jr.
 Son of Theresa Sheehan
 May 22, 1986 - May 18, 2016

Brian Keith Jones
 Son of Leroy and Jeanne Jones
 May 22, 1974 - May 22, 1974

Aaron Gene Marshall
 Son of Alycia Marshall
 May 26, 1996 - April 11, 2016

Jerry Mason Jr.
 Son of Mary and Jerry Mason
 May 6, 1968 - March 23, 2005

Daniel "Dan" Michael Milord
 Son of Mike Milord
 July 15, 1982 - May 5, 2004

Katherine Sarah Morris
 Daughter of Marguerite Morris
 March 11, 1990 - May 6, 2012

Shane Aaron Morris II
 Son of Michelle and Shane Morris
 June 16, 1992 - May 10, 2015

Sydney Elaine Patronik
 Daughter of Holly and Michael Patronik
 March 26, 2002 - May 11, 2002

Christopher Gordon Pessano
Son of Claire and Roger Cole
December 18, 1971 - May 26, 2017

Samantha Ann Rankin
Daughter of Vickie and Bart Rankin
November 19, 1988 - May 31, 2010

Wendy Dawn Saunders
Daughter of Ronald and Aljuana Saunders
May 20, 1972 - May 14, 1998

James Benjamin Scheff
Son of James and Gail Scheff
May 9, 1979 - June 1, 2012

Brandon Michael Sisler
Son of Laura Sisler
May 7, 1993 - October 15, 2011

Abigail Helen "Abbey" Skuletich
Daughter of John and Glenda Skuletich
March 9, 1984 - May 12, 1992

Tori Danielle Stitely
Daughter of Tawny Stitely
May 21, 1985 - November 26, 2012

Christopher Lewis Strader
Son of Lewis and Peggy Strader
May 27, 1979 - June 21, 1997

Cathryn Christiana Tsu
Daughter of Horace and Cynthia Tsu
May 27, 1997 - January 18, 2017

Carole Anne Wilford
Sister of Aljuana Saunders
January 7, 1944 - May 4, 1998

Matthew Tyler Williams
Son of Marta and Chuck Williams
May 8, 1986 - January 13, 2011



Our Children Remembered June 2021

James William Aikin
Grandson of Elizabeth and Barry Aikin
June 5, 1982 - March 18, 2008

Stokely Malcolm Andrews
Son of Mari and Malcolm Andrews
June 23, 2015 - June 13, 2017

William P. Anthony Jr.
Son of Bill and Linda Anthony
June 1, 1965 - January 2, 1999

Oscar William Atha-Nicholls
Son of Richard and Amy Atha-Nicholls
June 2, 2018 - June 2, 2018

Pamela Grace Clair
Daughter of Doris and Charles Clair
June 3, 1954 - May 11, 1984

Ryan Corr
Son of Pam Corr
March 2, 2003 - June 4, 2011

Jack Turner Dumont
Son of Jill and Dave Dumont
June 26, 2003 - June 26, 2003

Jonathan David Elkins
Son of Viki Foster
June 16, 1987 - June 5, 2017

Alice Engleman
Daughter of Elizabeth Engleman
November 20, 1997 - June 21, 2011

Joseph A. Esterling Jr.
 Son of Joe and Michelle Esterling
 June 7, 1967 - April 27, 1990

Thomas James Geoghegan
 Son of Maureen Geoghegan
 November 13, 1969 - June 30, 2013

Emilio Juan Honesto
 Son of Alexandra Honesto
 June 29, 2010 - March 26, 2011

Scott Andrew Katsikas
 Son of Linda Snead
 June 9, 1980 - August 13, 2004

Bryan Adam Krouse
 Son of James and Judy Krouse
 March 11, 1965 - June 29, 2007

James Arthur Leese
 Son of Judith and John Leese
 July 27, 1960 - June 25, 2013

Deana Jean Marie Lenz
 Daughter of Patricia and James Lenz
 June 5, 2009 - June 6, 2009

Nicholas Paul Liberatore
 Son of Larry and Pat Liberatore
 September 27, 1980 - June 9, 1997

Brian Richard Melcher
 Son of Norma and Donald Melcher
 Brother of Cheryl Lewis
 August 30, 1960 - June 14, 2002

Cody Thomas Moczulski
 Son of Robin Moczulski
 September 19, 1993 - June 13, 2010

Shane Aaron Morris II
 Son of Michelle and Shane Morris
 June 16, 1992 - May 10, 2015

Shannon Marie Nuth
 Daughter of Patty and Joe Nuth
 Sister of Bridget Rice
 June 25, 1991 - June 20, 2016

Kevin Alan O'Brien
 Son of Lorrie and Keith O'Brien
 December 24, 1986 - June 29, 2012

Sarah Elizabeth Patterson
 Daughter of Cindy Patterson
 June 28, 1987 - September 19, 2006

Krystal Brooke Pearce
 Daughter of Douglas Pearce
 June 1, 1995 - October 3, 2013

James Benjamin Scheff
 Son of James and Gail Scheff
 May 9, 1979 - June 1, 2012

David C. Schmier
 Son of Gordon and Virginia Schmier
 June 26, 1964 - February 10, 1992

Kelsey R Silva
 Daughter of Francisco Martins Silva
 Daughter of Kristen Silva
 October 28, 1991 - June 16, 2011

Patrick F. Smith
 Son of Fran Smith
 February 20, 1978 - June 23, 2000

Daniel John Sohovich II
 Son of Vera Sohovich
 January 26, 1988 - June 9, 2011

Christopher Lewis Strader
 Son of Lewis and Peggy Strader
 May 27, 1979 - June 21, 1997

Cindy Sue Walker
 Daughter of Edward and Phyllis Frazier-James
 June 22, 1959 - June 21, 2010

Michael Shane Wheeler
 Son of Lita L. Ciaccio
 June 22, 1976 - January 11, 1997

Albert Wallace Whitby, Jr
 Brother of Susan Lovett
 April 25, 1951 - June 2, 1981

CREDO

**OF THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CHAPTER
OF THE BEREAVED PARENTS OF THE USA**

We are not alone.

We are the parents whose children have died.

We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life.

We are the aunts and uncles whose cherished nieces and nephews are gone.

We are here to support and care for each other.

We are united by the love we share for our children.

We have learned that children die at any age and from many causes.

Just as our children died at all ages, we too are all ages.

We share our pain, our lost dreams and our hopes for the future.

We are a diverse family.

We realize death does not discriminate against race, creed, color, income or social standing

We are at many stages of recovery, and sometimes fluctuate among them.

Some of us have a deep religious faith, some of us have lost our faith, while some of us are still adrift.

The emotions we share are anger, guilt and a deep abiding sadness.

But regardless of the emotions we bring to our meetings,

it is the sharing of grief and love for our children that helps us to

be better today than we were yesterday.

We reach for that inner peace as we touch each other's

lives and place our hand print on each other's hearts.

Our hope for today is to survive the day;

Our dream for tomorrow is gentle memories and perhaps to smile.

We are not alone.

We walk together with hope in our hearts.

DONATIONS

Donations may be made in memory of your child to offset the costs of our local chapter's events and communications.

CHAPTER GATHERINGS and MEETINGS

CHAPTER GATHERING SUMMARY: ZOOM Virtual Gatherings are being scheduled. These virtual gatherings will continue as long as necessary to adhere to state guidelines and Calvary United Methodist Church policy.

Using ZOOM is easier than you may think. You can use your smart phone, iPad, or PC. You will receive an email with the link to the meeting, and when it's time for the meeting just click on the link. You will be in a "waiting room" and the host will let you "in". **Our meetings are private so only those who receive the email with the link can participate.**

Here's a link for a tutorial on how to join a meeting:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting->

We have successfully had 25-35 people in our monthly virtual gathering and then break out into smaller groups for sharing. The virtual gathering will have the same feel as our in-person gatherings. We will have an opening, and possibly a guest speaker or video program. We will say our children's names and read the credo. After the general opening, we will hold smaller sharing groups.

Parents, invite and encourage your children to join our monthly gathering and participate in the **Sibling sharing group**. Siblings often neglect their grief and healing needs as they help their parents work through their grief. But sibling needs are different from parents. This is a chance for siblings to share their feelings with other bereaved siblings.

For more information, please contact our ZOOM host, Bob Burash, 410-551-5774, aabereavedparents@gmail.com

We will continue to have a general meeting, followed by sharing groups as desired for first-time attendees, and the newly and non-newly bereaved. ZOOM meeting access opens at 7:00 to allow for connection time and greeting time. The meeting will start shortly after. Gatherings are open to anyone grieving the death of a child. We are a self-help support organization dedicated to assisting parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child. We provide information and education to extended family and friends. Our greatest strength as bereaved families are the unity we find in shared experiences which can lead us out of isolation, give us a place to "belong," and offer us hope that together - we can make it.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT OUR CHAPTER GATHERINGS: Our Chapter gathers one evening a month to address topics and offer support to those who are mourning the death of a child. Our meetings last for approximately 2-3 hours. Sometimes we schedule a 30-minute presentation at the beginning of our meeting. When the speaker or panel has concluded the presentation, we introduce ourselves and say our child's name. We then take a short break before dividing into sharing groups. Sharing groups are facilitated by fellow Chapter members and are completely confidential. During this time, the issues that are discussed—particularly for the newly bereaved—focus on the issues facing participants today.

Our virtual meetings will basically follow the same format.

CORE GROUP MEETINGS: WHAT IS THE CORE GROUP: The Core Group consists of anyone who is interested in the ongoing administration of our Chapter. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend our core group meetings. We are always looking for new ideas and programs. A core group meeting typically meets from 7 pm until 9 pm, once a quarter. We discuss finances, upcoming activities, plan the annual walk, plan the service of remembrance, suggest programs for the monthly gatherings, and address any number of issues that may come before the group. These will also be ZOOM virtual meetings as long as necessary. **Please consider joining us.**

May 13 Core Group: Hybrid - Virtual Meeting starting at 7:00 PM. Anyone interested in participating, contact Bob Burash at aabereavedparents@gmail.com to be included on the email invitation.

CHAPTER CONTACTS:

Chapter leader: Bob Burash, 410-551-5774, aabereavedparents@gmail.com

Treasurer: Joe Belcher

Refreshments: Sandi Burash, 410-551-5774

Librarian: Bob and Sandi Burash

Programs/Sponsorships: Mary Redmiles 301-704-8086 mary.redmiles@gmail.com

Newsletter: Carol and Rick Tomaszewski, 410-519-8448, ctomaszewski74@gmail.com

Newsletter Publication:

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES: Please consider submitting an article, letter, poem or graphic for inclusion in the newsletter. Words that are meaningful to you will also be meaningful to others. Provide this no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication to ctomaszewski74@gmail.com. ... on **June 15 for the July/August Newsletter**

SPONSORSHIP of newsletter and website: You can honor your child's memory by sponsoring our newsletter and/or website. The donation for sponsoring the newsletter is \$75.00 and the website is \$25.00. Either sign up at a meeting or contact Mary Redmiles, Sponsorship Coordinator, at 301-704-8086 or mary.redmiles@gmail.com.

- For the newsletter, submit a photograph and a short memorial no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication. Forward this to ctomaszewski74@gmail.com. ...on **June 15 for the July/August Newsletter**. Also consider submitting something to be included in the section **THOUGHTS AND ARTICLES FROM CHAPTER MEMBERS.**
- For the website, a sponsor's link will be put on the home page that will open your child's photo from the Our Children section of the website, if you have given permission to include a photo on our website. If no photo is available, your child's name will still be included on the website home page.

COPYRIGHT: We reserve the right to limit distribution of this newsletter and/or specific articles. Distribution to family and friends is permitted. Please contact our Editor at ctomaszewski74@gmail.com or Chapter Leader at aabereavedparents@gmail.com before widely distributing the newsletter or using any content in any manner. Thank you.

CHAPTER RESOURCES:

OUR WEBSITE: <http://www.aacounty-md-bereavedparents.org/HTML/Home.htm>

Visit our website for information about our Chapter, Our Children, the Newsletter, upcoming events, and many other resources.

FACEBOOK: Join our private, members only, Chapter forum. In Facebook, search for “Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA”. Our moderator will respond to requests to be included as a friend.

LIBRARY: ANNUAL BOOK SEARCH – Please look at the books on your shelves and if any belong to the chapter, consider returning them. You can mail them to Anne Arundel County Chapter BP/USA, P.O. Box 6280, Annapolis, MD 21041 or contact Sandi and Bob at aabereavedparents@gmail.com and we can arrange to meet.

AMAZON SMILE – 2020 has seen a nice increase in online shopping and many people are using Amazon. Consider shopping at smile.amazon.com or with AmazonSmile turned on in your Amazon Smile app. Do not forget to select your charity as "Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Bereaved Parents of the USA". When you use smile.amazon.com or with AmazonSmile turned on, Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchase to our chapter. There is no extra cost to you to support our chapter.

CREATIVE HANDS HEALING: Using your hands and being creative is often a very soothing way to work through your grief. Our Chapter has two projects, Angel Gowns and Knotted Blankets, that may provide you a means of using your hands to make something for other bereaved parents and children. Although we have not been able to actively pursue these during the pandemic, we expect to continue these efforts in the future. If interested in participating, please contact Carol Tomaszewski, ctomaszewski74@gmail.com.

RESOURCE INFORMATION: Any and all resource information provided in our Newsletter, Website or Emails, is for your information and reference. Our Chapter does not necessarily endorse the views, recommendations, guidance, or advertising associated with these resources. National **BPUSA** provides a list of resources on their website:

<https://www.bereavedparentsusa.org>

PRIVACY POLICY: Our Chapter is cognizant of privacy concerns related to our children. We ask that each family provide written consent to include your child’s name, photo, birth date and death date in our newsletter, on our website and other published listings of Our Children, such as for the Service of Remembrance. If you don’t see your child’s name included in our publications, and would like them to be included, please contact **Bob Burash, 410-551-5774**, aabereavedparents@gmail.com, use subject: Privacy

ACCURACY: We make every effort to ensure the accurate spelling of your child’s name and his/her date of birth and date of death. If any of this information is incorrect or your child’s name does not appear in the newsletter, let us know.

How Kindness Fits Into a Happy Life

By [Jill Suttie](#) | February 17, 2021

Excerpts from: Greater Good Magazine <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>

A new analysis of decades of research shows that when we are kind to others, we are healthier and happier.

We all know that it's good to be kind to others. Kindness is an important virtue for sustaining relationships, which helps to build a trusting and cooperative society. You may have also heard that kindness makes you happier and healthier. But what does that mean for you? What acts of kindness will make us happiest, and who tends to benefit the most?

As expected, people who were kind tended to have higher well-being per lead researcher Bryant Hui. Being kind involves effort, which takes away from comfort but could make people feel better about themselves and their abilities, which would provide a sense of meaning.

The researchers found that people who were kind tended to have higher self-esteem and a sense of self-efficacy. To a lesser degree, they also experienced less depression and anxiety and improved physical health—with the links to health being strongest in older adults.

Being kind may make us feel better about ourselves as a person or about the meaning of our lives, confirm our self-competence, distract us from our own troubles and stressors, give us a warm-glow feeling, or help us be more socially connected with others. All of these could potentially improve our well-being—reducing our stress, improving our mood, or providing community—and they could hold more importance at different stages of life, too.

In the meantime, Hui says, the biggest take-home from his research is something he heard the Dalai Lama say long ago: “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

“Helping others is a universal virtue and a very affordable and economic way to benefit others’ and our own well-being,” he says. “As the saying goes, helping others is helping yourself.”

Editor's Comments: A friend sent me this article, thinking of our Bereaved Parents Chapter volunteers and how their kindness and compassion had helped through her intense times of grief. Now she is volunteering, using her skills to honor her son and provide hope to others. Many of us found help in our early years of grief from the compassion and understanding of those in our Chapter who have been on their grief journey longer. Some of us now volunteer to help others in a myriad of ways. There are volunteer opportunities within our Chapter. No matter what your talents or focus in life, we welcome your participation in helping us to continue to help the newly bereaved, and honor our children.

This continues to be a year of uncertainty, and as we transition to hybrid-virtual meetings, there will be a need for others to help coordinate in-person activities, and allow us to extend kindness, hope and compassion to all.

Please consider that even small acts of kindness and compassion can help others deal with their grief, and by helping others you will ultimately be helping yourself.

To discuss volunteer opportunities, please contact Bob Burash, Chapter Leader, 410-551-5774, aabereavedparents@gmail.com

You can shed tears because they are gone, or you can smile because they lived. You can close your eyes and pray they will come back, or you can open your eyes and see all that they left for you. Your heart can be empty because you can't see them, or you can be full of the love you shared. You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday. You can remember only that they are gone, or you can cherish their memory and let it live on. You can cry and close your mind and feel empty, or you can do what they would want. Smile, Open your heart, Love... and go on.

—Elizabeth Ammons
lessonslearnedinlife.com

